

Smithfield, now half a dozen victims burned together at Colchester, now as many as thirteen at Stratford le Bow. In Guernsey, the burning of a mother and her two daughters swells the tale of barbarity with unutterably shocking details. At Canterbury, Archbishop Pole was responsible for the destruction of eighteen victims, while five died of starvation and maltreatment in the archiepiscopal prison. The horrors of imprisonment were indeed scarcely less revolting than the torments of the stake. In such foetid dens as Bonner's coal-house death frequently intervened to lighten the labours of its episcopal henchmen. The total number of the victims of the flames was little short of three hundred, and one authority adds another hundred who died of starvation and maltreatment. The fury of bigotry sated itself with savage inhumanity towards the dead as well as the living. The bodies of Bucer and Fagius, which tainted the churches of St Mary and St Michael at Oxford, were exhumed and burned. That of the wife of Peter Martyr, which was interred near the tomb of St Frideswide at Cambridge, was dug up and thrown into a cesspool.

How, you ask, could men inhabiting a civilised country stoop to action so brutal ? Because some canting dotards had possession of the conscience of a fanatically disposed sovereign, and presumed, in the true spirit of the mediaeval obscurantist, to distort Christianity with their hideous sophistries. There was, moreover, in Mary, as in her father, a vein of vindictive cruelty, which saw, in disobedience to her will, one of the blackest of crimes. The Marian persecution was the outcome of the Tudor imperiousness as well as of religious fanaticism, and to some extent the Protestants, who strenuously appealed to conscience against the edicts of queen, Parliament, and the Church, were the victims of their opposition to the will of the ruler as well as the will of the pope. These Protestants, when in power under Edward VI., had deprived and imprisoned Catholic bishops ; they had burned two persons, Joan Bocher and Van Parris, for heterodox views of the incarnation, and for this brutality they deserve the most severe censure; they had demanded conformity to the Prayer Book and the Forty-two Articles; they had formulated the abominable opinion that the denial of the doctrines of the Christian religion was a